

written by him, in 1598, to Jean Jacomot, who translated the drama into Latin, he says that it had been played by the students at the Academy of Lausanne, and also that it had been played in France "avec un grand applaudissement." The piece, indeed, had a phenomenal success; during the sixteenth century ten editions appeared, and thirteen more were published during the seventeenth century.¹ Before the year 1600 it had been twice translated into Latin, once into Italian and once into English—by Arthur Golding. Its popularity, due in large measure, no doubt, to its sectarian character, was not undeserved on purely literary grounds. Pasquier tells us that it "lui fit tomber les larmes des yeux,"² and in our own day Petit de Julleville has declared that "il y a de vraies beautés dans cette pièce." M. Émile Faguet has referred to it as "peut-être la première tragédie française où il y ait trace de vrai talent," and again: "L'œuvre est forte, bien conduite et touchante. Surtout elle est vraie. De Bèze est un moraliste. Il est descendu dans le cœur humain avec une lanterne, comme dit Mme. de Sévigné, et il y a trouvé ce dont nous faisons si grand cas, la tragédie psychologique."³

It is almost unnecessary to say that the subject had been treated in the French *mystères* before Beza turned his attention to it. In the famous cycle known as *Le Mystère du Viel Testament* the story holds a prominent place in the A, B and C versions, and three more or less modified versions of the cycle play were published during the first half of the sixteenth century. All six texts are collated by Rothschild in his edition of *Le Viel Testament* published by the Société des Anciens Textes Français; the three detached versions are denoted by the letters D, E and F. Of these, D, which dates

¹ For a bibliography of the various editions and translations of *Abraham Sacrifiant* V. *Le Mystère du Viel Testament*, vol. ii, pp. xlix-lxii. This list, however, omits the second edition—*Le Sacrifice d'Abraham, tragédie française séparée en trois pauses à la façon des actes de comédies, avec des chœurs, un prologue et un épilogue*. Paris, H. Estienne, 1552 in-8. V. Dr. Heinrich Heppe's *Theodor Beza in Hagenbach's Leben und Ausgewählte Schriften der Vater und Begründer der reformirten Kirche*, vi. Theil, p. 370.

² *Recherches*, vii. p. 615.

³ *Histoire du Théâtre*, p. 84.

⁴ *Op. cit.* p. 98. For a different opinion V. Introduction to *Le Mystère du Viel Testament*, vol. ii, p. 1x+.